

**[PROPOSED] MINUTES**

**LACCHR Strategic Planning Session #1**

**Meeting of January 6, 2022**

**Via Microsoft Teams Video & Audio Conferencing**

Present:	Michael Cheung	Kevork Keushkerian
	Helen Chin	Preeti Kulkarni
	Ilan Davidson	Guadalupe Montaña
	Adrian Dove	Fredrick Sykes
	Jeanette Ellis-Royston	Sandra Thomas
	Porter Gilberg	Gay Q. Yuen
	Isabelle Gunning	
	Derric Johnson	
Staff:	Robin Toma	Grace Löwenberg
	Robert Sowell	Siranush Vardanyan
		Pierre Arreola

1. **Call to Order:** Commission President Guadalupe Montaña called the meeting to order at 10:04am. Commissioner Preeti Kulkarni as chair of the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee was called on to lead the meeting and welcomed everyone.
2. **Motion** finding a state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the members to meet safely in person, and/or state or local officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing, was made by Commissioner Ilan Davidson, and Commissioner Jeanette Ellis-Royston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Environmental Scan and Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**
  - a. Many attendees voiced that they were unable to open the documents shared for this meeting. Executive Director (ED) Robin Toma shared his screen to show the document “SP Survey-Consolidated Responses -Stakeholders” (See attachment). ED Toma suggested he would explain the table and walk through the document for attendees. It was recommended to focus on the “Environmental Factors” column. ED Toma explained that in strategic planning, environmental factors refer to the larger environment (physical, social, political, cultural), and not only the natural environment. Staff Pierre Arreola added that for peer-led approaches, it can be about considering larger, more specialized sources such as homeless outreach or individuals with lived experiences who are actually doing the work.

- i. Commissioner Kulkarni shared that county funding has been discussed for community-based organizations in committees and non-profits so she would like to highlight that. Also, homelessness has been discussed and the type of treatment that unhoused individuals receive is not acceptable. She recommended to make these individuals a target audience for the Human Relations Commission and encouraged thoughts of how the Commission can counter the spread of hate and violence on social media. Lastly, Commissioner Kulkarni shared her interest in the overlapping issues in anti-Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders hate (AAPIH) and the work that Black Lives Matter (BLM) is doing and how those two programs can move forward together.
- ii. Commissioner Gay Q. Yuen asked a clarifying question about whether these are the total number of responses or just a few comments. ED Toma shared that these are all of the ones that were shared in writing.
- iii. Commissioner Helen Chin discussed her work with homelessness in Culver City and an alternative crisis response model, which is focused on having non-law enforcement responding to crisis in the community. She stated she wanted to bring up the county funding for nonprofits to be able to do the work and shared she is looking for nonprofits that can fill this financial need. She explained how currently this work is being done in organizations by case workers and social workers, but those workers who are service providers are currently over-taxed. Commissioner Chin shared she would like to see that these individuals receive a living wage, especially because they are going into traumatizing situations, and it does not benefit the workers. She also suggested the need to decolonize the structure because it's a concern.
- iv. Commissioner Jeanette Ellis-Royston spoke about the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) briefly, asking whether the Human Relations and Strategic Planning Committee holds a position in asking legislation to address our concerns. She asked for ideas of how to promote these concerns to legislation and asked if this could be an action item for communication with legislation to address some of these topics. ED Toma responded by stating that time-to-time, recommendations are made to the Board of Supervisors (BOS), who adopts a Federal Legislative Agenda and State Legislative Agenda for action by the County's lobbyists. Requests are made to the Chief Executive Office to determine whether they need to raise it with the BOS. Any proposal for legislation goes through our Policy and Advocacy Committee and our Commission, which then goes to BOS. ED Toma shared that the BOS is currently the most progressive it has ever been and more in line with our views than ever, so it is important to raise questions about legislation first.

- v. Commissioner Kulkarni asked if feedback was received by the NAACP regarding environmental factors. Commissioner Ellis-Royston stated no updates for environmental factors, but it is focusing now on voter registration and voter suppression. Commissioner Kulkarni added that in addition to discussion items, other issues that were raised by American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) were about the unhoused, violence with the transgender community, specifically women of color, and some work they are doing with sex workers and the criminalization of sex work.
  - vi. Commissioner Tonya McKenzie stated that she believes there still is a lack of awareness about how the Commission can be of assistance to the Board of Supervisors (BOS). She stated she is still looking for more resources for parents, however wants to focus on encouraging public to join Commission meetings so that community members can be heard.
  - vii. Commissioner Derric Johnson joined to agree that the lack of awareness was a common issue that came up for him as well but wanted to know if there was an intention to have a person internally who can make sure that there is a more robust campaign in the community to raise awareness of what the Commission does. ED Toma shared that our Commission had previously lost our own Public Information Officer (PIO) when it became part of the department we merged with, but now he has the support of Otto and is asking to get that position back. Additionally, ED Toma shared that we don't want LA vs Hate to be seen as mainly a governmental agency program because many people we are trying to reach don't trust the government. Commissioner Kulkarni added that having media presence was important in getting the word out. Commissioner Fredrick Sykes agreed with commenters that awareness about the Commission needs to be raised.
- b. **Staff Member Feedback:** ED Toma shared some staff member feedback on environmental feedback.
- i. Ray Regalado shared that the pandemic created the need for individuals to be present and spread awareness, but more resources for HRC would allow us to function more optimally and meet community needs.
  - ii. Robert Sowell added that there are cities across the county that have human relations commissions and our efforts can multiply our impact by collaborating in a strategic way with these groups.
  - iii. Pierre Arreola shared that there have been some leadership transitions in the county, including a Chief, the Sheriff's Department, and Los Angeles Airport Police Department, so we can keep an eye and see how those factors can play into our opportunity to influence more.
  - iv. ED Toma said that social discourse around critical race theory represents an opportunity to educate and intervene in the issue locally, and that many stakeholders name anti-racism as a priority.

- v. Commissioner Kulkarni asked what we could have done with more staff with the HRC. Ray Regalado answered that communities of color have been looked at differently and it brings us many community conflicts. He suggested that having good, professional human relations experts out there can help communities navigate talking to each other to understand their experiences and where people come from rather than avoiding having peaceful conversations.
- c. ED Toma continued to share his screen and walk through the SP Stakeholders Survey and the staff feedback document.
  - i. Commissioner Davidson commented that focusing on the Commissioners taking opportunities in this could bridge and build collaborative infrastructure in some of these districts. We can participate in town hall meetings to share what we are doing on different levels. Additionally, he sees an opportunity for a taskforce of our commission to work the public relations (PR) realm and enable staff to be a voice to proliferate information about our mission, thinking about pathways and opportunities to get that information out.
  - ii. Commissioner McKenzie requested for more guidance as a commissioner and what commissioners are able to do or not do to raise awareness.
    - 1. ED Toma suggested that as Commissioners, the roles shift depending on the situation, however they can be the public face, engage with the public, and reach out to stakeholders to raise awareness of what we do.
    - 2. Commissioner Keushkerian stated that many people do not know that the Commission exists or what we do and asked if a public announcement can be made to share awareness that there is a Commission who will help if possible.
      - a. ED Toma stated that this is possible, but the challenge is that an announcement is never enough; commissioners must continue to do their part in raising awareness. Additionally, the public service announcements are less effective these days, and it seems that most awareness is raised through social media, which is why a public information officer is needed.
    - 3. Commissioner Davidson suggested it's important for the Commissioners to remind Supervisors that the Commission is available and presentable if needed, and maybe the best option is to do some PR with the Supervisors as a reminder.
    - 4. Commissioner McKenzie suggested a shared calendar so that staff is aware of county events and can attend.
      - a. ED Toma shared that this was raised previously, but there is no countywide calendar since each Supervisor does their own county events, but that is a good request.

5. Commissioner Yuen shared her beliefs that as Commissioners, we have strengths, have different spheres of influence, have membership in other institutions, and can possibly bullet point what the Commission is willing to represent- as a supplement to how staff is working on building awareness.
  6. Commissioner Kulkarni suggested that instead of tackling all issues, it is more helpful to focus on our abilities and consider what specific programs and strategies we will undertake in the next 3-5 years.
  7. Commissioner Sykes joined to share that based on his experiences, it is difficult to handle everything the right way all the time; so, all Commissioners have to carry their weight and do the right thing so that our goals can be met.
  8. President Montano shared that by listening, her recommendations are to first focus on spreading awareness of what the Commissioner does, request more action on legislation, advocacy when the Commissioners are out in the field, use TaskForce for PR, and share more information so that we can be added into the newsletters.
  9. Commissioner Gilberg recommended having better relationships with the Stakeholders so trust and true collaboration is built to prevent the fear that there will be detriment to the organization.
  10. Commissioner Ellis Royston thanked the commission for creating the Strategic Planning Committee, and she supports creating awareness for the community to know what the Commission does. She expressed interest in understanding the structure of the department we are in, as well as regulations regarding COVID 19.
    - a. Commissioner Kulkarni responded by reminding that the Human Relations Commission is breaking away from Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), and will be transitioning to the Board of Supervisors Executive Office within the next few weeks.
  11. Commissioner Helen Chin agreed that the Commission's presence is important and will help drive the community's engagement, however she is unsure about Commissioners speaking on behalf of the Commission due to the lack of training as Commissioners. She shared that in her experience, there is always work done with the staff when there is interest in engaging with the communities.
  12. Commissioner Davidson recommended a review of the Strategic Plan on a yearly basis to remind ourselves of the plan.
- iii. Commissioner Kulkarni recommended adding a third session for the Strategic Planning Session if needed and requested for ED Toma to provide documents that were reviewed during this session once again as

an attachment since not all individuals were able to access the information.  
All attendees agreed if needed.

**4. Our Mission, Vision, and Core Values/ Guiding Principles**

**4.1 Review of County Ordinance: LA County Commission on Human Relations:**

Item was tabled to the next Strategic Planning Session without objection.

**4.2 Review of Mission, Vision and Core Values and Discussion of Possible Changes:**

Item was tabled to the next Strategic Planning Session without objection.

- 5. Next Steps for January 13<sup>th</sup> Session on Strategic Priorities and Goals:** Item was tabled to the next Strategic Planning Session without objection.

**6. Adjournment**

[Submitted by staff for the strategic planning session(s). Note that these will be later reviewed and approved by VP-Secretary Davidson for submission to the full Commission for approval at a later date, so there will be an opportunity for corrections later.]